Raccoon State Recreation Area

Mike Clingerman, Property Manager
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Interpretive programs have concluded for the summer. Please join us for the following special events.

Historic Mansfield Roller Mill

Covered Bridge Festival	October 8th – 17th 8-6 daily
Mill Closes for Season	October 17th
Old Fashioned Christmas	December 4th & 5th 9 A.M. - 5 P.M.

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Halloween Camping Weekend	October 22nd & 23rd
Trapper Education	Nov. 6th & 7th 9 A.M. – 4 P.M.
Eagles In Flight	February 4th – 6th

For more information about these events, either stop by the property office or call 765-344-1412

How do leaves change color?

Ah, crisp autumn days. As you stroll through the park, do you wonder how leaves change color? It all begins when the days become shorter and cooler. This triggers a process in trees that cause them to go into dormancy – winter sleep.

During the spring and summer, the leaves are green because of a chemical or pigment, called chlorophyll. This pigment takes sunlight, water and carbon dioxide and converts it into sugars, food for the tree. When a tree prepares for dormancy, it stops making chlorophyll and the existing chlorophyll starts breaking down.

As the chlorophyll fades away, the colors yellow, orange and brown appear. This is the result of other pigments, carotenoids, which were always present, but were masked by the green of the chlorophyll. Anthocyanin, also a pigment, gives tree leaves those red and purple colors. Unlike carotenoids, anthocyanins are not always present; instead they are produced late in the summer when phosphate moves out of the leaves. This phosphate movement changes the breakdown of sugar in bright light so that anthocyanins form. The warmer the day, the more sugars produced and thus more brilliant red and purple colors.